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WASHINGTON REPORT
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DEFENSE BUDGET SHOWS REAGAN HYPOCRISY

President Ronald Reagan will undoubtedly go down in American history as a President who focused much of his time and energy on reducing spending and eliminating government waste. Certainly, no President has relied so heavily on the theme of cutting the cost of government.

Unfortunately, and with all due respect, I must point out that Reagan is neither consistent nor fully sincere in his cost-cutting. He has scrutinized every line of domestic spending in the budget for possible cuts. At the same time he has steered through Congress and signed into law a military budget which has received almost no scrutiny for cost effectiveness.

So that there will be no misunderstanding, let me state explicitly that I voted in favor of the final defense budget. Despite numerous objections to the budget, I felt the world situation required much of the massive military spending proposed.

What the President should have done, what we in Congress should have done, is given the same skeptical attention to military programs that were given to health, education and job training programs.

The defense budget is full of wasteful programs, obsolete weapons systems and duplications. The entire relationship between the Pentagon and defense contractors is pervaded with wastefulness and unlimited opportunities for corruption.

I believe America should have military strength second to no other country. I am deeply disturbed by the tremendous buildup of infantry, tanks and other means of conventional warfare by the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact countries. I do not think the United States

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should remain indifferent to the Soviet takeover of Afghanistan, Soviet activity in Africa and Latin America and the very real possibility of Soviet activity against Poland.

There are members of Congress who believe in giving the Department of Defense a blank check. They equate military security with unlimited and unmonitored Pentagon spending.

I have joined with like-minded members of Congress in authoring a resolution which states, "All funds appropriated for defense should be closely monitored in order to achieve the purposes for which such funds were appropriated at the least cost to the American people." We called on the President and the Secretary of Defense "to remove waste and inefficiency from the operation of the programs of the Department of Defense so as to utilize more efficiently scarce tax dollars." Adoption of these principles would enhance not endanger our military preparedness. Adoption of these principles would reduce taxes and contribute substantially to the fight against inflation.

WAXMAN